

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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EDUCATION, MOTOR VEHICLES, SALES TAX, AMONG REP. GOODIN'S NEW LEGISLATION

INDIANAPOLIS -- This week at the Indiana General Assembly State Rep. Terry Goodin (D- Crothersville) introduced a multitude of bills covering such issues as education, motor vehicles, and sales tax .

At the top of Goodin's list is House Bill 1637, which would require school corporations to establish a textbook fund. This bill would also create an annual state textbook grant of \$83 for each student and require that the rental fees schools pay for the textbooks be no greater than 25 percent of the purchase price for the book.

"If we intend for education to be free and open to all children in Indiana, then we must do away with such financial barriers as requiring parents to pay for their childrens' textbooks. For Hoosier families, the price of textbooks presents a sizable financial burden," said Goodin.

Goodin also wants to limit the financial burdens for university students in the state of Indiana. In House Bill 1461, Goodin is proposing that limits be placed on the increases in tuition for Indiana residents attending Indiana, Purdue, Ball State, and Indiana State Universities and the University of Southern Indiana and their regional campuses and satellite locations. The state educational institution would be allowed to adopt a similar policy regarding tuition increases for nonresident students. This policy would begin with the academic year in which the student first enrolls as an undergraduate.

"Sending a son or daughter to college is a large financial obligation for families, one for which they plan and budget," Goodin said. "To have a university increase tuition by a sizable percentage after a student's first year at school has forced some students to leave because they don't have the money to pay their tuition. I don't think that any student who has the drive to enroll in college should lose that opportunity because of finances. I think that House Bill 1461 will go a long way to preventing that."

House Bill 1465 would establish the Indiana prepaid college program, which allows for the advance payment of tuition, registration fees, and room and board at a community college or university. This program would be run by the Indiana education savings authority.

House Bill 1209 will protect teachers, school administrators, and school principals from civil liability suits resulting from the reasonable use of corporal punishment. Currently there are guidelines regarding corporal punishment in the Indiana Code, but they do not ensure the legal protection of teachers, school administrators, or school principals in the instances where they utilize corporal punishment.

"As superintendent of Crothersville Community Schools, my job is to not only protect the students, but also to protect the teachers and other administrators. I feel that this bill will ensure both," said Goodin.

House Bill 1463 would provide that each special needs student who does not pass the ISTEP will be reviewed by his or her case conference committee, which will determine the student's eligibility to graduate based upon that student meeting the requirements of an individualized education program.

Finishing up Goodin's education-related legislation is House Bill 1464, which would authorize public school corporations to display the motto of the United States, "In God We Trust" in a noticeable place in the main entrance of each

school. In addition, this bill would allow for the display of the United States flag and the Indiana state flag in each classroom of the school corporation, to which students would have the opportunity to voluntarily say the Pledge of Allegiance daily. A moment of silence would also be allowed to take place in each classroom on a daily basis.

"Schools are intended to instill in each child the morals and values of this country. Faith is a fundamental part of the moral fiber of this country and every public school corporation should have the opportunity to convey this to its students," said Goodin.

Goodin's legislation regarding the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) includes a bill that the Bureau of Motor Vehicles creates an "In God We Trust" license plate as one of the specialized license plates that Hoosiers can choose from.

"Indiana is home to a large population of believers, who should be allowed to acknowledge their belief on their own property, in this case their vehicles," said Goodin.

Additionally, Goodin is proposing legislation that will enable eligible individuals to apply for a disabled veterans license plate for each vehicle registered under their names. Currently, disabled veterans are only allowed to apply for two license plates, no matter the number of cars registered to them.

"I feel that this legislation provides disabled veterans the opportunity to proudly display their service to our country," said Goodin. "House Bill 1211 is just a small way to show our appreciation for their service."

House Bill 1210 would require the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to change its rules to allow the use of certain motorized carts on state park grounds. Individuals in possession of a driver's license who are at least 65 years old or disabled would be allowed to drive on state park grounds in motorized carts during daylight hours.

"Our state parks are one of the greatest assets of Indiana and should be made accessible to all Hoosiers," said Goodin.

Goodin has also proposed two bills relating to sales tax. House Bill 1462 would increase the maximum average monthly liability for sales tax from \$1000 to \$2500, which is the amount retail merchants are allowed to accrue without having to make monthly deposits with the Indiana Department of Revenue. House Bill 1636 would allow for a sales tax exemption for ATVs that are purchased with the intention to be used for agricultural purposes.

Another piece of legislation that Goodin has proposed is House Bill 1638, which would require the state to pay the employer's share of health insurance for retired employees who meet certain requirements.

"These employees have contributed greatly to the smooth running of the Indiana government in its day to day operations. We should not forget this and we should continue to help these Hoosiers after they've retired," Goodin said.

All of these bills will be presented to their respective committees in the near future.